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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; IRAQ WAR; PAKISTAN; IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT;
11/14/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories cover the allegedly 'hidden costs' of the war in Iraq; the Pakistani crisis; and the outcome of the Ibero-American summit.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "The 'hidden costs' of Bush's war"

Ana Baron, leading "Clarín's" Washington-based correspondent, writes (10/14) "The wars of Iraq and Afghanistan have already cost 20,900 dollars to every two-children US family... According to a report submitted yesterday to Congress by the Democratic opposition, the cost of the two wars amounted to 1.5 trillion dollars, which is twice as much as the Bush administration calculated.

"The difference is basically due to the so-called 'hidden costs,' which include interests on loans taken to afford the cost of war, losses in failed investment, and long-care medical care of veterans, as well as the always increasing value of the oil barrel.

"US Senator Harry Reid for Nevada, the Senate Majority leader, said that the report is the best evidence that Bush's strategy on the Iraq war is mistaken. Meanwhile, the White House termed the report 'politically motivated.'

"... The (Joint Economic Committee) report (on the Iraq War) is not naive. It was released in the context of the Democrats' initiatives both at the House and the Senate to pass a draft bill that will grant 50 billion dollars requested by Bush to finance the war as long as the White House agrees to set a date for the return of troops. However, this does not mean that the information provided by the report is not true. Harry Reid said: 'This is a new reminder of how Bush's denial to change his policy on Iraq has had real consequences for Americans.'"

- "Danger"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," opines (11/14) "When the Pakistani crisis was already in its current irreversible road, US analyst Moises Naim, head of Foreign Affairs, had a daring idea. He wondered whether Pervez Musharraf ran the risk of becoming another Sha of Iran..., who had been supported by the West just like the Pakistani is.

"... The former Persian strong man was defeated by a impoverished and fanatic population, which was kindled by years of repression and mistreatment.

"What the US cannot see in Pakistan is that this risk is extremely present but much more seriously than in the Iranian case. This

nuclear power has a huge population that supports the Taliban... Musharraf can no longer manage this crisis... Only if he distances himself can transition start, which is what the opposition demands. The doubt is whether this alternative political structure has enough power to avoid an insurrection. The mistakes made are huge, and lack of perspective has not been the less important one."

- "The nerves-on-edge summit"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" (11/14) editorializes "Spanish King John Charles did well when he put Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez at bay... Chavez had been disrespectful with former Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar, whom he publicly called 'a fascist.'..."

"In defense of Chavez, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega accused Spain of conspiring with the US in the region.

"Only Chilean Michele Bachelet, Peruvian Alan Garcia and Salvadorian Elias Saca supported the King and criticized Chavez. The others stayed aloof, which implies a position.

"... In the eyes of the world, Latin America showed it is on two different political roads and confirmed that scandals of this kind, to which Chavez often contributes, are increasingly frequent.

"Both the Venezuelan President and Ortega, supported by Fidel Castro and Evo Morales, have made it clear that they feel much more comfortable at parallel, summits (the so-called summit of the peoples), which places the region at opposed scenarios, just like happened in 2005 Mar del Plata Summit... Who understand a president that discusses free trade on one side and proclaims the 21st century Socialism on the other?..

"... The question to be made by the leaders that were not involved in the incident is whether the region or their countries themselves

obtained some benefits from the total of offenses left by the Summit."

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